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ABSTRACT

This course is designed to assist adults in documenting their prior experience, gaining an understanding of the policy and practices of recognition of prior learning (RPL), and then applying for RPL in either further education or employment. The 30-hour course is designed to be delivered over a series of weeks to allow time for students to reflect on their experiences, collect information from many sources, and process the information into career and study plans. Introductory materials include course aims and information on structuring and accrediting the course. Tutor notes address targeted learners, using the group process, required experience, and use of session plans. Detailed session notes are provided for 10 3-hour sessions. Components of the notes are as follows: the topic, session aim, competencies, outline of session with recommended time allotment, resource list, detailed tutor notes (lesson plans), learning activities, student handouts, and assessment tasks. Session topics include the following: building the group; identifying life values; a good experience; learning from experience; profiling skills; career planning; planning training needs; matching skills and competencies; applying for RPL; and RPL interview. Appendixes include a list of course competencies; assessment tasks, and a tutor checklist. Contains 21 references. (YLB)

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BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

A course in Recognition of Prior Learning

A guide for teachers and tutors by

Donna White

You mean everything I've
learnt is something
I know!?



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A course development project funded by the Adult, Community and Further Education Board

BUILDING ON EXPERIENCE

A course in Recognition of Prior Learning

A guide for teachers and tutors by

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Building on Experience

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INTRODUCTION

Why have a *Building on Experience* course?

For many years adults have participated in adult, community and further education (ACFE) as a stepping stone to further study, employment or training. Many of the programs in the sector have helped individuals access pathways to other educational opportunities, including technical and further education (TAFE) accredited courses, other training programs, the Victorian Certificate of Education, and higher education.

In recent times the adoption of the national qualification standards and the development of articulation among accredited courses have led to an increase in the demand for recognition of prior learning (RPL). RPL is the national policy which recognizes the skills and knowledge of an individual regardless of how the knowledge or skill was acquired.

This is a relatively new avenue for adults in the ACFE sector. RPL will speed up their journey to achieve credentials as official recognition will be given to the competencies they have learned through life, work and other educational experiences.

RPL is a challenge to teachers and tutors in the sector; a challenge to communicate this new avenue to our students and to assist them in accessing its power.

What are the aims of the course?

This course is designed to assist adults to document their prior experience, gain an understanding of the policy and practices of recognition of prior learning, and then be able to actively apply for RPL in either further education or employment.

What are the expected course outcomes?

At the completion of the course students will have:

- increased their self confidence
- identified their skills acquired through life and work experiences as well as in previous education and training
- developed a profile of skills, recording them with accompanying evidence
- developed a realistic career and further study plan
- completed an application for RPL as entry or credit in further education, training or employment.

Introduction

How is the course structured?

The course is nominally 30 hours in duration and is designed to be delivered over a series of weeks to allow time for students to reflect on their experiences, collect information from many sources, and process the information into career and study plans.

This course document provides detailed session notes including weekly teaching and planning strategies, learning activities, student handouts, assessment tasks, and a bibliography of resources. The 30 hours are organized into 10 sessions of three hours each.

There are three major areas

- 1 the identification and documentation of skills – Sessions 1 to 5
- 2 planning a career direction and training needs – Sessions 6 & 7
- 3 applying for RPL – Sessions 8 to 10

Providers can tailor the course to meet the timetabling requirements of their program and the needs of their students.

The course may be used in several modes.

- As a stand-alone course of 30 hours or more.
Tutors can adapt the length of sessions and number of weeks to suit their specific needs.
- As career planning, confidence building, and job search units of a DEET training course for unemployed people.
- As an elective element in other accredited courses, with minor adaptations in assessment to meet prescribed levels e.g. Certificate of Occupational Studies or Advanced Certificate.
- As the general curriculum option of a part-time or full-time Certificate of General Education for Adults.

How is the course accredited?

The course *Building on Experience* is in the process of applying for accreditation through the Vocational Education and Training accreditation board.

Three of the Mayer key competencies were chosen as the basis for application for accreditation.

Introduction

As noted in the 1992 publication, *Putting General Education to Work*:

*'Key Competencies are competencies essential for effective participation in the emerging patterns of work and work organisation. They focus on the capacity to apply knowledge and skills in an integrated way in work situations. Key Competencies are generic in that they apply to work generally rather than being specific to work in particular occupations or industries. This characteristic means that the Key Competencies are not only essential for effective participation in work but are also essential for effective participation in **further education and in adult life more generally.**'*

Australian Education Council and Ministers for
Vocational Education, Employment and Training report.

The key competencies chosen for this course are:

- collecting, analysing and organising information,
- communicating ideas and information, and
- working with others and in teams.

The assessment tasks have been designed to allow the participants to demonstrate their ability at Performance Level 3 as described in *Putting General Education to Work*.

The competencies and suggested assessment tasks are detailed in the appendices.

Notes to Tutors

Who are the learners?

The adults who would benefit from this course are ones who:

- may not have finished formal schooling
- may have been out of the paid workforce for a while
- may have lost confidence
- may be interested in returning to study
- may be interested in re-entering the workforce
- may be native English speakers or those from non English speaking backgrounds.

The educational venues that might choose to offer the course may vary from neighbourhood houses and Community Centres, to TAFE Colleges and private training providers.

Using the group process

The course has been designed to be used with an on-going group of 10 to 16 students. The group process is fundamental to its success. The group becomes a potent influence for individual change, a source of mutual support and shared responsibility. Often within the group are found the complementary skills needed for the satisfactory achievement of the competencies.

When individuals in a group trust each other and when self-esteem is positively enhanced by specific activities then people are more willing to acknowledge the extent of their abilities and skills. Such acknowledgement is the foundation of applying for recognition of prior learning.

This curriculum therefore allocates several sessions to group-building, self-esteem, valuing exercises, and the sharing of stories of personal significance, prior to focussing directly on skills recognition and naming.

Experience required of tutors

- The tutor needs experience in the group learning process and in developing a non-judgemental, supportive environment. This environment will be student centred to encourage a person to develop the skills of recollection, reflection and awareness of their own learning experiences.
- The tutor needs to understand that reflection needs time, that people may resist recalling the past, and that previous patterns of behaviour may act as obstacles to goal setting.
- Further the tutor should have a good understanding of recognition of prior learning principles and desirably be a qualified RPL assessor. If they intend to use the curriculum as a General Curriculum Option, they will need to meet the teaching requirements of the Certificate of General Education for Adults.

Notes to Tutors

Using the session plans

The session plans and activities are intended as a guide only. It is hoped that tutors will adapt the activities and develop new teaching strategies.

Activities are designed to relate to the performance criteria and competencies either as preparatory exercises or assessment tasks. Each session plan states the competency elements to which it is related.

The session plans are organized in colour-coded sections:

Session outline and tutor notes: Buff

Student handouts: White

Assessment

Formal assessment is suggested but not mandatory. Choose the option that best meets the need of your students.

- 1 No formal assessment tasks. Students complete a number of class activities but these are not evaluated against the competencies.
- 2 Three assessment tasks – one for each competency. A number of suggestions are given with the competencies in Appendix 1. Of these, three tasks have been developed fully and form part of Sessions 5, 7 and 8. Ideas on how to evaluate them are included in Appendix 2.
- 3 One integrated assessment task, which addresses all the competencies, and is designed to meet the requirements of the Certificate of General Education for Adults, general curriculum option. This task forms part of Session 8. Detailed evaluation checklists and the moderation documentation are included in Appendix 3.

Resources required for delivery

Each student needs a copy of an appropriate RPL magazine, and two career planning publications.

RPL magazines

- *Recognition of Prior Learning, A Practical Guide for Women* (also suitable for men, with a few alterations)
- *New Place: Same Skills. A Guide for People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds*

Available through Broadmeadows Recognition and Assessment Centre, 44 Buckley St., Essendon 3040. Telephone 9254 3000.

Notes to Tutors

Career planning publications

- *Job Titles arranged in Interest Categories*
- *I Can Do That Too! How to count your work skills*

Available free of charge through Occupational Information Unit,
DEET, 222 Exhibition St., Melbourne 3000. Telephone 9666 7166.

Tutors need access to the video, 'Skills Audit'.

Available through DEET Audio-visual Library,
222 Exhibition St., Melbourne 3000. Telephone 9666 7267.

SESSION PLAN

1

TOPIC: *Building the Group*

SESSION AIM: To build group identity.
To introduce the course aims.
To value student life experience.
To compare formal and informal learning environments.

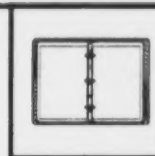
COMPETENCIES: Preparatory exercises for Element Three:
Working with Others.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	'Getting to know you' activities • The wheel	60 min
	BREAK 	15 min
2	Expectations of course and explanation of course	30 min
	BREAK 	15 min
3	Introduction to valuing life experience • Choosing a baby-sitter/shopper • Learning from key events • How do we learn	60 min

Resources for 'Getting to know you' activities

- *Life Skills for Women*, by C. Gillespie

TUTOR NOTES



1 Getting to know you activities 60 min

Building a sense of belonging in a group is vital in most adult learning situations, and certainly in this one, where students will risk evaluating their skills before their peers.

To encourage students to get to know one another use any warm-up activity that will allow people to talk with each other individually for a period of time.

Activity: The Wheel (see handout)

The suggested activity, 'The Wheel', is similar to one from *Life Skills for Women* but it is not gender specific. Allow at least 60 minutes for all learners to talk to each other.

BREAK 15 min

(This amount of self-disclosure is often tiring, so two breaks in this first session may be advisable.)

2 Student expectations and an explanation of the program 30 min

Further group development occurs when individuals have an opportunity to discover common goals and feelings.

Activity: What do students expect from the course?

Ask people to form small groups of 3 or 4, and brainstorm what they expect from the course. One person from each group acts as a scribe and records the ideas on butchers paper.

Pin up the lists and ask students what they observe from comparing the lists, for example: common goals, differences, emotions, etc.

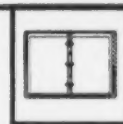
Follow this with an explanation of **what the program offers**.

(You may wish to present these on large cards, overhead transparencies or simply write them on the board.)

The course offers opportunities:

- 1 to develop confidence in a supportive environment
- 2 to recall good experiences in your life
- 3 to discover what you have learned from these experiences
- 4 to identify the work you would like to do

TUTOR NOTES



- 5 to develop a career plan
- 6 to understand what further training is needed
- 7 to learn how to get exemptions in training by using your life experience

You may wish to introduce the term 'recognition of prior learning' at this point but without much explanation. For example:

- this valuing of life experience is happening world-wide
- in Australia it is called 'recognition of prior learning'.

BREAK 15 min

3 Introduction to valuing prior experience 60 min

These three activities aim to introduce the concept of life experience as a valuable context of learning.

Activity A focuses on the value of practical knowledge, accumulated through everyday activities.

Activity B focuses on key life events and the learning that arises from such significant experiences.

Activity C compares the formal educational context with the experiential or informal one and focuses on the contributions of each.

Activity A: Choosing a baby-sitter/shopper

Select either the baby-sitter or shopper example depending on the composition and experience of the participants.

Choosing a baby-sitter:

Ask the students when they are choosing a baby-sitter, what do they look for?

Do they insist on someone of a specific age, with a certificate in child care,

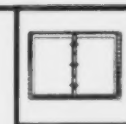
or something else?

Board responses as they arise. They will probably include various skills, attitudes, and knowledge.

Ask them where a person learns to be a baby-sitter?

OR

TUTOR NOTES



Choosing a shopper:

Ask students who would they ask to do their shopping if they were temporarily disabled (example: broken leg)? Why?

Board responses as they arise. They will probably include various skills, attitudes, and knowledge.

Ask them where a person learns how to shop?

Skills are learned from life experience, not just school.

Activity B: Learning from Key Events

Ask students to write down two key events in their lives, events that have shaped their lives.

As the tutor, give two examples of your own. For example:

- migrated to Australia
- got divorced.

Then ask people to share these with a neighbour.

Focus on what they learned out of the two experiences. Example:

- I learned:
- how to apply for a passport
 - how to fill in forms
 - how to get a room in a new city.

Activity C: How do we learn? Where do we learn?

The previous activities have shown that we learn much of what we need to know from life experience. However we also learn in the formal learning situation.

The point of the following exercise is to:

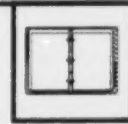
- value both settings

Ask: *How is the learning gained from life experience different from the formal learning in school?*

Board responses. Look for ideas such as:

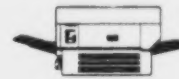
- structured curriculum vs unstructured experience
- general theory vs practical, specific ideas
- impersonal, academic environment vs personal, individualised one
- consciously acquired vs unconsciously acquired
- assessment required vs reality checks
- may be forgotten vs usually permanently remembered

TUTOR NOTES



- teacher takes responsibility vs learner is responsible
- homework vs no homework
- external motivation vs personal drive and need
- qualification, diplomas, certificates vs no external qualifications
- defined time and place limits vs no structured limits
- relationship of expert teacher to student vs relationship of adult to support group/family/ friends/children
- immaturity vs maturity

The Wheel

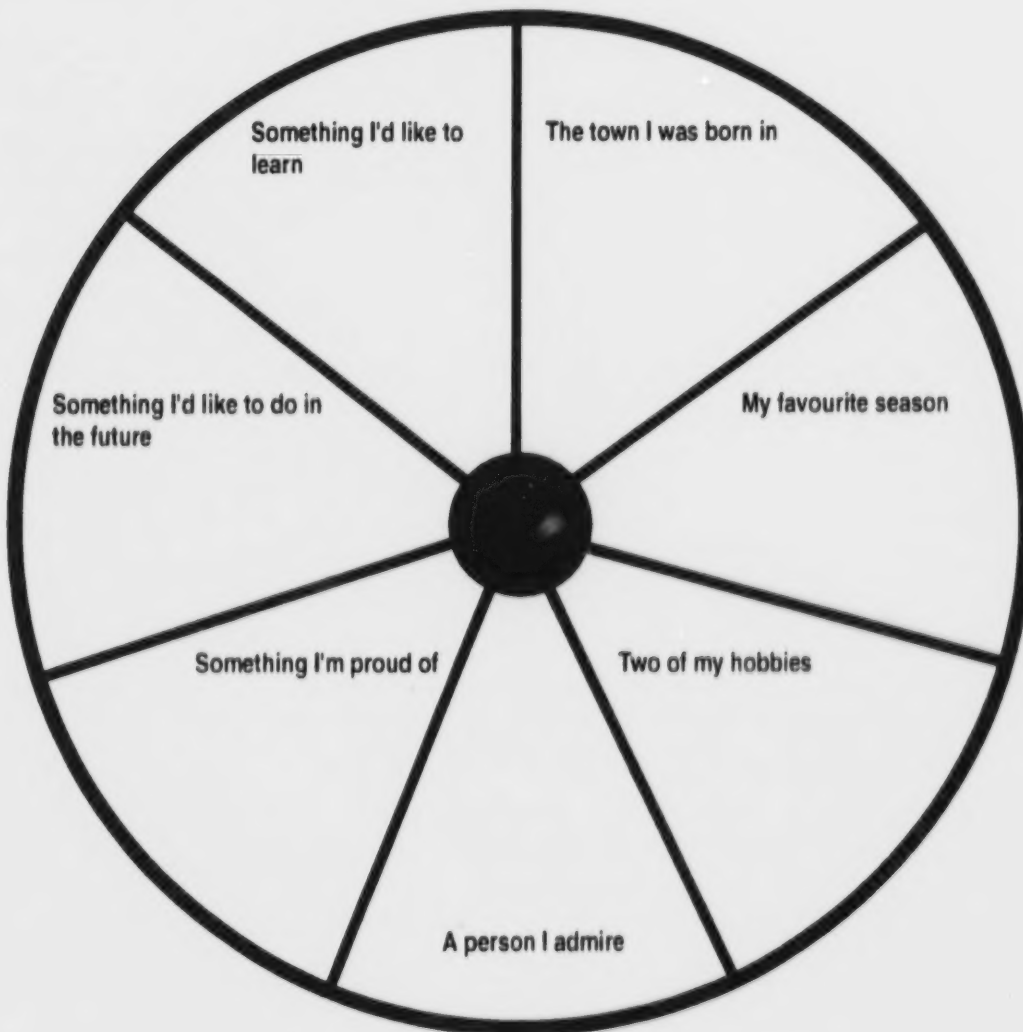


Instructions

Here is a wheel with seven sections and seven things about yourself.

Fill in the seven sections.

Ask your partner to tell you seven things about themselves.



SESSION PLAN

2

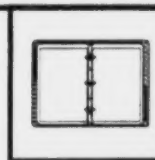
TOPIC: *Identifying Life Values*

SESSION AIM: To continue to build group cohesion.
To establish an environment of trust.
To explain the role of values in life choices.
To facilitate greater understanding of personal values.

COMPETENCIES: Preparatory exercises in Element Three:
Working with Others.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Warm up/ revision	30 min
2	Importance of self esteem	25 min
3	Life values exercises	
	• Things I love to do	50 min
	BREAK 	20 min
	• What do I value in life	55 min

TUTOR NOTES



1 Warm up 30 min

Choose any suitable warm-up activity that reviews the names of the students and continues to build group cohesion. The one suggested here can be lots of fun if students know they can help each other out if they can't remember all the names.

Activity: The Name Game

The group sits in a circle. The first person introduces themselves saying 'My name is *Sandra* and I like sandwiches' (the second word can rhyme with the name or merely begin with the same letter). To add more complexity and energy, the speaker can mime an action that matches the item they like.

The next person repeats the first sentence and adds their own. This continues around the circle with the cumulative effect of all names being repeated many times and with much laughter.

Revision

Remind students of the key points of the last session:

- Sometimes we value experience more than qualifications
- Skills are learned from life experience, not just formal education.

2 Importance of Self Esteem 25 min

A person must value who they are, what they know, and what they can do before they will talk about their past achievements and identify their skills in public. As the tutor/facilitator of this group, you will need to establish an atmosphere where differences are respected and self-disclosure is welcomed and safe.

These activities are designed to encourage students to get to know their own value systems, and the resulting choices they make in daily living.

Activity: What is self-esteem?

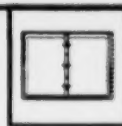
Brainstorm the meanings of the word *self-esteem*.

Board responses.

Brainstorm the meanings of the word *values*.

Board responses.

TUTOR NOTES



Combine the two by showing how self-esteem and values are connected.

Example: Self-esteem is the value I put on myself. It is reflected in my life choices and my daily activities, as well as where I choose to spend my time, my money, my energy, my thoughts.

3 Life Values Exercises

These two activities build self esteem by allowing participants to reflect on what they enjoy doing and then on identifying the key values that underpin their decisions in life.

Activity: Things I love to do (see handout) 50 min

In this activity students individually indicate ten things they love doing and code them according to time spent, money spent, where it was learned etc. Students also complete some kernel sentences and share their findings and feelings with another person in group.

Distribute the handout and read through the instructions with the students. Because there are a number of stages in this exercise, you may wish to guide the group through it one stage at a time.

Example:

Stage one: List ten things you love to do.

Stage two: Apply each code to the list

Stage three: Note how each item was learned

Stage four: Complete the kernel sentences

Stage five: Share the sentences with a partner

BREAK 20 min

Activity: What do I value in life? (see handout) 55 min

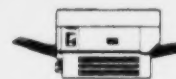
This exercise invites students to identify the dominant values in their lives. They will be referred to later when students begin to focus on career plans. A career choice needs to match the dominant values or at least be accommodated without severe conflict.

Distribute the handout and clarify the instructions. Allow students approximately 20 minutes to complete the checklist and choose their top five values.

Ask students to share any of their top five with a different partner and explain why they made these choices.

To encourage speaking about significant personal subjects, ask each student to tell the group about 2 or 3 of their most important values.

Things I love to do



Instructions

Read this page and then complete the chart on the next page.

- 1 List ten things you love to do (big things in life or little things).
- 2 Put a code next to each relevant item (example: place a ✓ in the box under the \$ code beside each activity that costs you more than \$10 each time you do it).

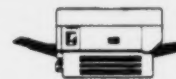
Codes:

- \$ — more than \$10 each time it is done
- A — prefer to do alone
- P — prefer to do with other people
- PL — requires planning
- DW — either you or others think you *do well*
- Date — date or day this activity last done

- 3 On the right hand side of the list, note how you learned to do this activity.

Example:

Value Codes						Ten things I love doing	How I learned this
S	A	P	PL	DW	Date		
✓		✓	✓			1 Dancing	my sister
		✓				2 Talking with friends	watching my parents with friends
	✓					3 Swimming	lessons at school
				✓	Sat 2/3	4 Gardening	classes at learning centre



Things I love to do

Value Codes						Ten things I love doing	How I learned this
S	A	P	PL	DW	Date		
						1	
						2	
						3	
						4	
						5	
						6	
						7	
						8	
						9	
						10	

Think about your responses and then complete these sentences:

- 1 I realise that I value _____ more than _____
- 2 I'm surprised that _____
- 3 I'm glad to see that _____
- 4 I realise that I learn from _____

Values exercise



Values guide our lives. The more we understand about what we value in life, the more able we are to make satisfactory choices and take appropriate actions.

Instructions

Read each value carefully and think about it. Tick the ones important to you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Independence
being able to determine my activities,
having the freedom to do things on
my own | ☐ Inner peace
developing harmony from within |
| ☐ Recognition
receiving positive feedback and credit
for work well done | ☐ Duty
doing what is expected of me |
| ☐ Power and authority
controlling the activities or partially
controlling destinies of others | ☐ Assertiveness
standing up for what I believe in |
| ☐ Competence
doing anything I do well | ☐ Help others
helping people directly, either
individually or in small groups. |
| ☐ Influence people
changing attitudes or opinions of
others | ☐ Affiliation
belonging to a group |
| ☐ Acceptance
being content with what I have | ☐ Popularity
being liked by others |
| ☐ Expert
being regarded as very well-
informed, acknowledged as an expert
in a given field. | ☐ Order
being neat and tidy |
| ☐ Help society
contributing to the betterment of the
world | ☐ Family
meeting the needs of the family |
| ☐ Fulfilment
realising my potential | ☐ Family life
leading a family-based life |
| | ☐ Health
looking after myself |
| | ☐ Knowledge
continually learning |



- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Friendship
developing close personal relationships with people | ☐ Wealth
having lots of money |
| ☐ Honesty
acting with integrity | ☐ Challenge
engaging in complex questions and demanding tasks |
| ☐ Balance
living a balanced life | ☐ Faith
living a life based on spiritual or religious beliefs |
| ☐ Nature
appreciating nature in my lifestyle | ☐ Change
enjoying a variety of responsibilities and changes |
| ☐ Financial security
not having to worry about an income | ☐ Self-sufficiency
supplying my own needs |
| ☐ Fitness
taking care of my physical self | ☐ Competition
engaging in activities that pit my abilities against others |
| ☐ Emotional security
feeling confident within myself | ☐ Creativity
designing new ideas, programs, structures or anything else not following a format developed by others |
| ☐ Adventure
engaging in frequent risk-taking | ☐ Excitement
experiencing a high degree of stimulation or frequent novelty and drama |
| ☐ Fun
feeling pleasure in life, leisure, play | |
| ☐ Tranquillity
avoiding pressures and 'the rat race' | |

Now that you've ticked the values of importance to you, decide which are most important. Write down the five you feel are uppermost in your life today and put them in order.

My five most important values

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

SESSION PLAN

3

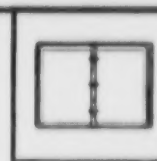
TOPIC: *A Good Experience*

SESSION AIM: To encourage reflection on past accomplishments.
To demonstrate how to identify the skills within these accomplishments.

COMPETENCIES: Preparatory exercises for Element One:
Collecting Information.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	30 min
2	A good experience	
	• Writing the story	60 min
	BREAK 	20 min
3	A good experience	
	• Identifying the skills in the story	70 min
This activity may need more than one session to complete		

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 30 min

1.1 Remind students of key points of last week:

- what we value in our daily lives
- what underlying values determine our choices in life and particularly our career choices.

1.2 Ask students to turn to a new partner and tell them about one or two of their top values from the *What do I value in life* exercise.

2 A good experience 60 min

What we enjoy doing we are often good at. Enjoyment often equals accomplishment. So one of the best ways to identify what we are good at is to spend time recalling times when we enjoyed ourselves and accomplished something.

Some students will resist this activity, finding it difficult to recall anything good or anything they consider an accomplishment. However when they begin to hear the stories of others they will soon be able to identify a similar experience themselves.

Recalling the event

To help students access the memory of an accomplishment ask them to sit quietly and think back over their lives to one of the highlights, or to an experience that made them feel good about themselves, one that they are proud of.

It can be simple or complicated. (Pause.)

Now, ask students to turn to the person next to them and briefly tell describe the event. When was it, who was there, what did you accomplish?

(Allow 5-10 minutes for this.)

Board a selection of experiences from the group to stimulate memories. Point out ones that lend themselves to the analysis of the skills embedded within. Example:

- organising a birthday party for an eight year old
- putting together a family tree using photographs
- joining this course

TUTOR NOTES



Activity: Writing the story of a good experience (see handout)

Explain to the students that they are now going to write the story of 'A Good Experience' they have had, including all the details they can think of.

Guide participants to choose something they have accomplished themselves, not one that belongs to their children or another significant person. (See references for further reading on this technique.)

Distribute the *Good Experiences* handout. It provides questions to help them recall details.

When students are finished writing, break for coffee.

BREAK 20 min

3 Identifying the skills in the story of 'A Good Experience' 70 min

Explain to the class that hidden within the accomplishment are the abilities and skills that led to its success. Often it is easier to identify someone else's skills rather than our own. So the class will now help each other to identify the skills hidden within the stories.

You may wish to brainstorm the word SKILL to tease out the unrecognized and undervalued ones. Example:

SKILL is the ability to do something well, due to knowledge, practice, training, or experience

Activity: Finding the hidden skills

Ask someone to volunteer to read their story aloud.

The class then brainstorms HOW the experience was managed by the story-teller; HOW s/he made it happen. i.e. the skills.

Board these skills. The story-teller makes a copy of these skills.

Ask the story-teller to accept the suggested skills and strengths without comment.

Ask the class to focus on listening to the story and avoid judging whether they personally would consider it significant or how they would have done it differently.

Complete this story-telling and brainstorming of skills and strengths for each member of the group. Each story-teller to retain a written copy of the resulting skills.

TUTOR NOTES



This may take some time and run into the next session. It is important that all the stories are heard and analyzed.

You may choose to do this in small groups but as it takes considerable skill to identify hidden skills it may be better to lead the activity yourself. It also uncovers a larger range of skills and students learn how to spot the skills by repetition.

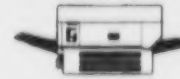
Homework

Instruct students to write the story of another significant experience in their lives and with the help of a friend discover the hidden skills in it. Bring it to class next session.

References for background reading

- *Steer Your Own Career* by Bob Bisdee
Penguin Books, Australia, 1984.
Clear advice on how to elicit skills from good experience stories including a useful list of transferable skills for the profiling of skills task in Session 4.
- *Career Satisfaction and Success: How to know and manage your strengths* by B. Haldane
Wellness Behaviour, Washington, 1988.
Another version of the Good Experience exercise with excellent advice for teachers.
- *Learning from Experience*
Learning from Experience Trust
County of Avon Education authority, U.K., 1987.
Good ideas for student reflection on experience.

A good experience



Instructions

To begin, think of any experience you have had which was significant for you in some way.

Any experience will do. It may come from your work life, family life, education, leisure or sporting activities, just as long as it is significant and one you are proud of.

You might choose it because:

- it was enjoyable
- it had successful outcomes
- it taught you a lot
- it gave you a sense of achievement
- it earned you respect and recognition from others
- it involved time, energy or effort.

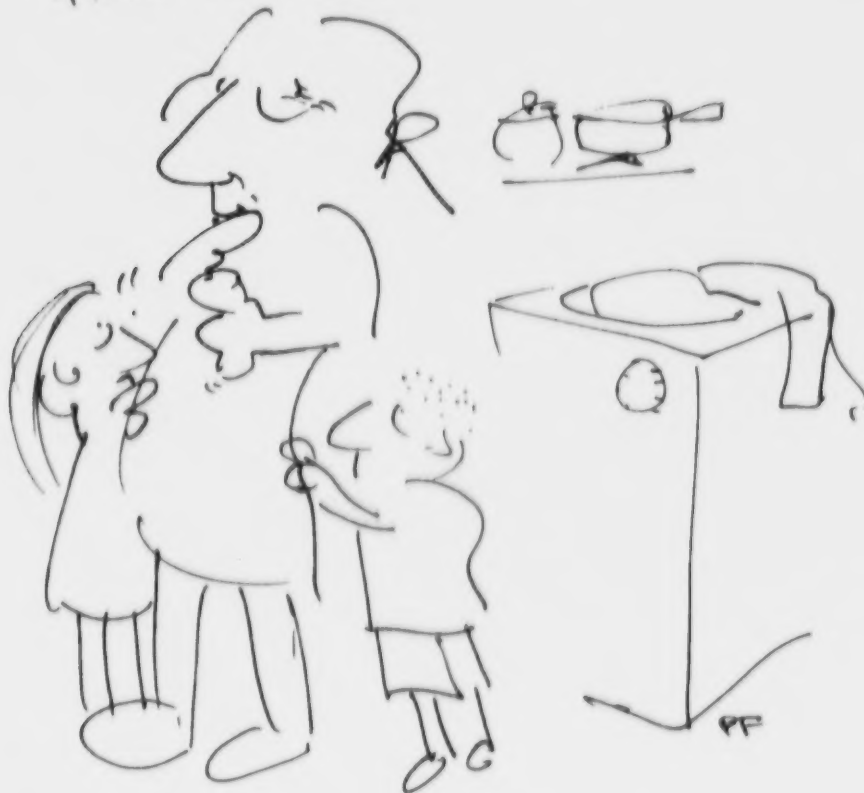
Tell the story of this good experience or accomplishment you are proud of. Don't worry about spelling or writing mistakes because no one else will read this, only you.

Consider these questions to help you remember:

- What happened? – the beginning, the middle, the end
- Who was involved?
- Where and when did it happen?
- How did you do it?
- What was motivating you at the time?
- How did you feel, before, during and after? What do you think made you feel good about this?

Adapted from *Learning from Experience*
County of Avon Education authority
UK, 1987

They're going to teach me
time management?!!!



SESSION PLAN

4

TOPIC: *Learning from Experience*

SESSION AIM: To encourage reflection on the effects of significant life experiences.
To introduce recognition of prior learning.
To facilitate the valuing of skills used in the home.

COMPETENCIES: Preparatory exercises for Elements One and Three.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	20 min
2	How are we shaped by experiences?	40 min
3	Introduction to RPL	25 min
	BREAK 	15 min
4	Developing skills in the home	80 min

Resources needed for this session

Multiple copies of:

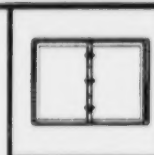
- *RPL, a Practical Guide for Women* (also suitable for men, with a few alterations) or
- *New Place: Same Skills. A Guide for People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds.*

Available from Recognition and Assessment Centre, Broadmeadows College of TAFE, 44 Buckley St, Essendon 3040. Telephone 9279 2222.

- *I Can Do That Too! How to count your work skills*

Available free of charge from Occupation Information Centre, DEET, GPO Box 18200, Melbourne 3001. Telephone 9666 7259.

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 20 min

- 1.1 Remind students of the key point of last session:
Skills and strengths are developed through experiences or accomplishments.
- 1.2 Ask students what other skills they recognised when writing the second story.
Board these skills. Often people remember more of their own skills from hearing those of others.

2 How are we changed by experiences? 40 min

Not only do we acquire skills and develop strengths through significant experiences but we are often changed in other ways. To allow students the opportunity to reflect on their experiences in a more wholistic manner the next two activities have been included.

The first, *Learning from Experience*, focuses on understanding the impact of significant experiences on self-concept, perception and inter-relationships.

The second activity, *Applying your Knowledge*, allows students to consider whether they can increase their depth of knowledge by using the learning from one experience in another.

Distribute the handouts one at a time and build in time for students to discuss their reflections with each other.

Activity: Learning from experience (see handout)

Ask students to answer the questions for one of the experiences they have written about:

- (a) How did your thoughts and feelings affect your actions?
- (b) How did your relationships change?
- (c) What knowledge did you gain?
- (d) What can you now do that you couldn't before?
- (e) What lessons has it taught you?

When finished, they are to share their reflections with two other students.

TUTOR NOTES



Activity: Applying your knowledge (see handout)

Ask students to consider these questions about the good experiences they have written about:

- (a) Where/when have you used this knowledge or these skills in other situations later in your life?
- (b) Did you handle the situation better?
- (c) Can you imagine a situation in the future where you might use this knowledge or skill?

Again they are to share their reflections with other students.

3 Introduction to *Recognition of Prior Learning* 25 min

At this point students have begun to acknowledge that their prior experiences are valuable. Introducing *Recognition of Prior Learning* will now be in the context of valuing their experiences.

Excellent learning materials have been developed by the Broadmeadows Assessment and Recognition Centre. Two particular student workbooks explain the meaning and purpose of RPL in a simple and clear manner. The magazine format attractively presents information that guides students through the process step by step.

Choose the magazine that best meets the needs of your students. Either

- *RPL, A Practical Guide for Women* (also suitable for men, with a few alterations) or
- *New Place: Same Skills. A Guide for People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds.*

It will more effective if students have their own copy of the magazine rather than a class set so that they can refer to it later when actually applying for RPL. These can be purchased at a nominal cost from the Broadmeadows Assessment and Recognition Centre. However, both magazines grant permission to photocopy for classroom use, if necessary.

Activity: What is RPL?

Distribute the RPL Magazines.

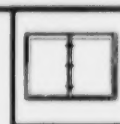
Read through the early parts of the magazine and answer any questions that arise. Later sessions will cover other sections in the magazine and eventually guide students to completing the RPL application form itself. The aim of this session is merely to introduce the term recognition of prior learning and its purpose.

RPL, A Practical Guide for Women; pages 2 to 7

New Place: Same Skills; pages 10 to 15

35

TUTOR NOTES



BREAK 15 min

4 Developing skills in the home (see handouts) 80 min

Most women and men undervalue the skills they have developed while working in the home, raising children, and managing the household. With the present emphasis on reskilling and restructuring the workforce, it is becoming apparent that working at home can prepare people for the newly valued skills of multitasking, prioritizing and strategic planning.

'These are skills that are more often seen in the home environment where the complexities of juggling roles and demands are balanced off. They also appear now in offices where faxes, word-processors and other electronic equipment make office work less specialised but more overlapping in demands.' (Cox and Leonard, 1992)

It is important to elicit the abilities, knowledge and aptitudes that students have learned while completing everyday tasks so that they can be valued and seen in the context of skills necessary in the paid workforce.

The next two activities facilitate this aim. The first can be fun and loud as students call out the similarities and differences they see in the paired cartoons of adults engaged in various activities in the home and at the workplace.

The second activity encourages students to name the skills they personally have developed in the home by completing a check-list.

Activity: Which is work? (see handout)

The cartoons by Judy Horacek present pairs of jobs. Put the cartoons on overhead transparencies and ask the group how each pair is similar and how each is different.

If you want a quieter activity hand out copies of the cartoons and ask students to work in small groups or pairs.

Board the responses.

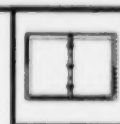
Activity: Skills learned in the home (see handout)

This list comes from *Handle on Work* and enumerates a number of activities involved in being a parent, or homemaker.

Ask students to tick the ones that they have been involved with over the years.

Ask them to share this information with a partner.

TUTOR NOTES



Homework

To further reinforce the value of the home as a place where skills are developed, set some work from the DEET publication: *I Can Do That Too! How to count your work skills*. This is to be completed for the next class session.

Handout the booklets and read pages 1, 2 and 3 aloud to explain what they are to do for homework. Then set pages that focus on activities in the home. Example:

pages 9 and 12 – parenting

pages 6 and 7 – cooking and clothing

pages 5 and 8 – managing budgets and chores inside and outside the house.

References for background reading:

- *From Ummm... to Aha! Recognising Women's Skills*
by Eva Cox and Helen Leonard
Australian Govt Pub, 1991.
- *Handle on Work*
by Renata Tratter
Council of Adult Education, Vic, 1989.

Learning from experience



Often the learning that has actually been gained from experience has come about almost sub-consciously. Until you deliberately reflect about an experience you may not be aware of how much you have really learned.

Instructions

Take the time to reflect on what you have learned. Remember too, that you don't merely acquire skills and develop strengths through significant experiences, but that you are often changed in other ways as well.

Answer these questions for one of the experiences you have written about.

- (a) How did your thoughts and feelings affect your actions?
- (b) How did your relationships change?
- (c) What knowledge did you gain?
- (d) What can you now do that you couldn't before?
- (e) What lessons has it taught you?

Share your reflections with two other students.

Applying your knowledge



You increase the depth of your knowledge when you use the learning from one experience in another.

Instructions:

Consider these questions about one of the good experiences you have written about:

- (a) Where or when have you used this knowledge or these skills in other situations later in your life?

- (b) Did you handle the situation better?

- (c) Can you imagine a situation in the future where you might use this knowledge or skill?

Share your reflections with other students.

Which is work? – 1



Job title: *Householder*



Job title: *Chef*



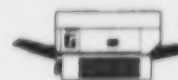
Job title: *Householder*



Job title: *Cleaner*



Which is work? – 2



Job title: *Householder*



Job title: *Teacher*



Job title: *Householder*



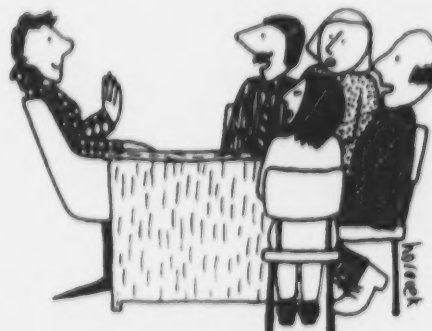
Job title: *Accountant*



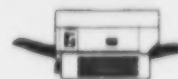
Job title: *Householder*



Job title: *Manager*



Activities checklist



Here are some activities involved in being a parent, homemaker, volunteer, student or paid worker.

Tick the ones you have been involved with.

Share this information with a partner.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ managing money | ☐ caring for and improving self |
| ☐ meeting nutritional needs | ☐ providing for health and safety |
| ☐ maintenance and repair | ☐ managing time |
| ☐ team building | ☐ cleaning |
| ☐ transportation | ☐ planning events and entertaining |
| ☐ using the telephone | ☐ administering and organising |
| ☐ communicating | ☐ caring for others |
| ☐ teaching | ☐ sports |
| ☐ budgeting | ☐ first aid |
| ☐ gardening | ☐ fundraising |
| ☐ report writing | ☐ researching a topic |
| ☐ meeting deadlines | ☐ public speaking |
| ☐ counselling | ☐ building |
| ☐ purchasing | ☐ decorating |
| ☐ menu planning | ☐ negotiating |
| ☐ cooking | ☐ studying |
| ☐ research | ☐ typing |
| ☐ renovating | ☐ corresponding |
| ☐ working with electronic or other equipment | ☐ delegating to others |

I only know how to do
things in real life.!



SESSION PLAN

5

TOPIC: *Profiling Skills*

SESSION AIM: To facilitate the valuing of skills developed through unpaid work.
To explain the process of writing a profile of skills.
To explain and set the assessment task for the competency of collecting ideas.

COMPETENCIES: Assess the performance criteria for Element One:
Collecting Information.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	20 min
2	Skills in unpaid work	40 min
	BREAK 	20 min
3	Developing a profile of your skills	100 min

Resources needed for this session

Student copies of:

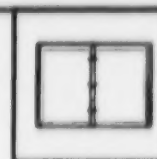
- *RPL, A Practical Guide for Women*
- *New Place: Same Skills. A Guide for People from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds*
- *I Can Do That Too!*

Video:

- 'Skills Audit' Catalogue no. 360

Available from the DEET Occupation Information Centre, Audio-visual Library, 222 Exhibition St., Melbourne 3000. Telephone 9666 7267.

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 20 min

1.1 Remind students of key points of last session:

- much knowledge and many skills are learned in the home
- they can be applied to other situations.

1.2 Debrief homework:

- in pairs students discuss the skills they identified from the *I Can Do That Too!* booklet.

2 Skills in unpaid work 40 min

It is very common for people to dismiss the experience and skills they learn when they aren't paid or when they volunteer their services. It is as if only paid activities require skill. By identifying and recording unpaid work students can begin to see how much they contribute to society and that this work demands skills and abilities. It is then easier to assess whether the things they have done would be useful to them in looking for paid work, or in deciding what training they might be interested in.

Video: 'Skills Audit'

To graphically illustrate the value of unpaid work and demonstrate how to collect a list of skills (relevant to the Profile of Skills task) show the video 'Skills Audit'.

This is a short 15 minute video. It is available for borrowing free of charge from:
Occupation Information Centre,
Audio-visual Library,
222 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne 3000. Telephone 9666 7267.

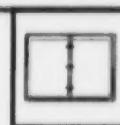
Activity: What do I do in the community (see handout)

This activity encourages students to recall and value their unpaid activities.

Distribute the handout and ask a few students to give examples of their own unpaid work. Board these to prompt others to recall their experiences.

Instruct students to make a list of where they have contributed their time and energy in unpaid or volunteer work. They need to recall the name of the place, organisation or group they worked with, approximately when this happened, and some of the specific things they did.

TUTOR NOTES



BREAK 20 min

3 Developing a Profile of Skills 100 min

At this point students are asked to pull together all their skills; those developed in the home, through unpaid work and through paid work.

The RPL magazines present students with excellent case histories of other adults who have worked through this process.

RPL, A Practical Guide for Women, pages 8 to 15

New Place: Same Skills, pages 16, 17, 28 to 31 and 45.

After reading about the experiences of others, they will be ready to focus on their own considerable skills.

Activity or Assessment Task: Profile of Skills (see handouts)

The task may be set in either of two forms:

- 1 As an assessment task for Element One: Collecting information (refer to competencies in Appendix 1).
- 2 As a class activity with no assessment and fewer steps required.

There are different instructions and handouts for each format (see handouts).

Please note that there are three stages in the assessment task – collecting ideas, choosing categories and identifying the possible purpose of the profile. There are only two stages in the class activity – collecting ideas and choosing categories.

Distribute the appropriate handout and answer any questions about the task.

Assist students in using a variety of sources that list and categorize skills:

- RPL magazines especially *New Place: Same Skills*, page 45.
- *I Can Do That Too!* booklet.
- Your Transferable Skills from *Your Career Change Action Kit*, by M. Lewis and K. O'Neill.
- What are my skills? from *Yes I Can Do That*, by Margaret Taylor.

The latter two checklists differ in language ability and complexity. You may wish to use both or select the most appropriate one. (See handouts.)

Handout one or two checklists.

Allow students the rest of the session to work on the task.

What do I do in the community?



Instructions

Complete the chart listing your unpaid and volunteer work. These are occasions where you contributed your time and energy and where you developed and used a variety of skills.

Name of organization	When you worked	Things you did

Here are some examples of groups that often rely on unpaid workers for effective functioning:

- School organizations – e.g. School council, Parents & Friends, canteen, excursions
- Child Care Centre
- Children's clubs – e.g. scouts, guides
- Community groups – e.g. recycling, improving the parks
- Sporting teams
- Church groups – e.g. choir, Ladies Auxiliary etc.
- Art/craft/music groups
- Service groups
- Get fit groups
- Caring for aged
- Home tutoring
- Adult and community education
- University of the third age
- Library work
- Service at op shops, hospitals, refuges, etc.

Profile of Skills



The aim of this task is to record your skills, not merely in a long list but gathered together in groups under headings. These headings or categories are to be chosen after considering various options, such as people skills, technical skills, creative skills, etc.

There are three steps in the task:

1 Collecting ideas

Make a comprehensive list of your skills.

Include those skills gained in paid work as well as those gained in unpaid/volunteer work and household work.

Use several checklists to identify your skills. Both the RPL magazine, and the *I Can Do That Too!* booklet have lists of skills and your tutor will provide you with others as well.

2 Choosing categories

Choose categories from a variety of sources that best reveal your strengths. You can use the same sources as listed above to find a good range to choose from. Arrange your skills according to the categories you choose.

3 Identifying the purpose

In a short statement, explain how you could use this profile of your skills; who might want to read it and why.

Submitting the final product

When you have completed all these steps write up your *Profile of Skills* and submit it to your tutor for feedback. Include:

- a statement of the purpose of the profile
- a list of skills organised in categories
- a record of the sources you used.

Profile of Skills



The aim of this task is to record your skills, not merely in a long list but gathered together in groups under headings. These headings or categories are to be chosen after considering various options, such as people skills, technical skills, creative skills, etc.

There are two steps in the task:

1 Collecting ideas

Make a comprehensive list of your skills.

Include those skills gained in paid work as well as those gained in unpaid/volunteer work and household work.

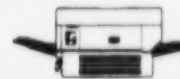
Use several checklists to identify your skills. Both the RPL magazine, and the *I Can Do That Too!* booklet have lists of skills and your tutor will provide you with others as well.

2 Choosing categories

Choose categories from a variety of sources that best reveal your strengths. You can use the same sources as listed above to find a good range to choose from. Arrange your skills according to the categories you choose.

When you have completed all these steps write up your *Profile of Skills* and bring it to class next session.

What are my skills?



Instructions

- Fill in the grid and identify what skills you have used in the past and which ones you are good at and which ones you like.
- This writer calls skills 'work'. Remember work does not mean only paid work, it includes all the activities you are engaged in.

TYPE OF WORK	I HAVE DONE IT		I AM GOOD AT IT		I LIKE IT	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Working with equipment: instruments machines tools vehicles computers						
Working outdoors						
Working with materials: wood clay metals plastics textiles						
Working with food						
Being physically active and energetic						
Working with plants						
Working with animals						
Observing						
Measuring						
Solving problems						



TYPE OF WORK	I HAVE DONE IT		I AM GOOD AT IT		I LIKE IT	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Using imagination, being creative and artistic with: music textiles words food paint pen and ink clay and ceramics materials computer graphics						
Designing and drawing						
Working with people: teaching instructing helping nursing serving selling entertaining advising solving problems carrying out instructions						
Working with people: one to one small groups large groups						
Influencing people: leading organising supervising managing						
Working with money: budgeting planning investing keeping records						



TYPE OF WORK	I HAVE DONE IT		I AM GOOD AT IT		I LIKE IT	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Working with facts, data, numbers						
Working with information: collecting studying filing storing categorising reading memorising interpreting analysing comparing criticising evaluating						

from *Yes I Can Do That*, by Margaret Taylor

Your Transferable Skills



Instructions

- Take each section one at a time.
- Check the ones that apply to you. Remember to value yourself highly as if you were your best friend or your mother.
- Give an example of where you use it.
- Discuss each section with a different partner.

Step 1 Identify your skills by checking the boxes:



Organisational skills

- ☐ **Organising** time
- ☐ **Improvising** solutions
- ☐ **Completing** tasks on time
- ☐ **Attending** to detail
- ☐ **Adapting** procedures
- ☐ **Operating** independently
- ☐ **Thinking** clearly
- ☐ **Solving** problems
- ☐ **Placing** things in perspective
- ☐ **Making** appointments
- ☐ **Putting** theory into practice
- ☐ **Utilising** various strategies
- ☐ **Streamlining** systems
- ☐ **Prioritising** tasks
- ☐ **Maintaining** financial records

Step 2 Describe a situation where you have demonstrated this skill in the past.

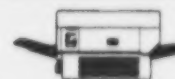


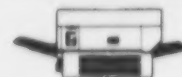


- ☐ **Working** to tight schedules
- ☐ **Working** effectively under pressure
- ☐ **Performing** consistently and reliably
- ☐ **Setting and achieving** goals
- ☐ **Tackling** a variety of tasks
- ☐ **Organising** events and activities
- ☐ **Scheduling** events and activities
- ☐ **Completing** tasks reliably
- ☐ **Working** independently

Interpersonal skills

- ☐ **Accepting** differences of opinion
- ☐ **Understanding** personal problems
- ☐ **Maintaining** confidentiality
- ☐ **Recognising** the skills of others
- ☐ **Confronting** issues
- ☐ **Consulting** others
- ☐ **Encouraging** people with special needs
- ☐ **Advising** others
- ☐ **Fostering** creativity
- ☐ **Counselling** others
- ☐ **Establishing** rapport
- ☐ **Promoting** trust
- ☐ **Anticipating** people's needs
- ☐ **Helping** others to learn
- ☐ **Dealing** with a diversity of people
- ☐ **Sizing up** people and situations
- ☐ **Negotiating** solutions

☐ Understanding feelings _____☐ Liaising with others _____☐ Coping with difficult clients _____**Management/leadership skills**☐ Delegating responsibility _____☐ Supervising staff _____☐ Following hunches _____☐ Enforcing regulations _____☐ Planning sessions _____☐ Implementing procedures _____☐ Helping others make decisions _____☐ Directing others _____☐ Interpreting data _____☐ Deciding quickly _____☐ Responding to emergencies _____☐ Chairing meetings _____☐ Perceiving causes and effects _____☐ Maintaining business ethics _____☐ Using authority responsibly _____☐ Creating effective teams _____☐ Negotiating business independently _____☐ Inducting new staff _____☐ Creating staff harmony _____☐ Developing policies _____☐ Taking responsibility for client service _____

**Communication skills**

- ☐ **Speaking** to groups _____
- ☐ **Reporting** accurately _____
- ☐ **Using** a telephone effectively _____
- ☐ **Explaining** abstract ideas and concepts _____
- ☐ **Replying** to correspondence _____
- ☐ **Establishing** a network _____
- ☐ **Interviewing** people _____
- ☐ **Representing** employer at functions _____
- ☐ **Preparing** drafts _____
- ☐ **Proofreading** materials _____
- ☐ **Analysing** documents _____

Technical skills

- ☐ **Understanding** terminology _____
- ☐ **Graphing** information _____
- ☐ **Filing** material _____
- ☐ **Sorting** for relevance _____
- ☐ **Taking** shorthand _____
- ☐ **Compiling** lists _____
- ☐ **Operating** computers _____

Marketing/promotional skills

- ☐ **Obtaining** sponsorship _____
- ☐ **Leading** fund-raising efforts _____
- ☐ **Generating** new business _____
- ☐ **Identifying** and reporting opportunities _____
- ☐ **Establishing** business contacts _____

(from *Your Career Change Action Kit*, by M. Lewis and K. O'Neill.)

SESSION PLAN

6

TOPIC: *Career Planning*

SESSION AIM: To inform students how to re-name skills for the workplace.
To assist students to identify a career plan.
To collect and evaluate assessment tasks, if set.

COMPETENCIES: Preparatory exercises for Element Two:
Communicating Ideas.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	20 min
2	Renaming skills	40 min
3	Career planning	
	• Raising awareness: 'The Party'	60 min
	BREAK 	20 min
	• Choosing career categories	20 min
	• Understanding <i>The Job Guide</i>	20 min
4	Investigating a specific career	
	• Field work task	40 min
	The field work may include a visit to the Career Reference Centre for a separate session.	

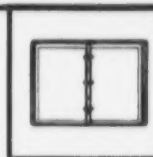
Resources needed for this session

Multiple copies of:

- *The Job Guide*
- *Job Titles arranged in Interest Categories*

These are available free of charge through the
DEET Occupational Information Section,
222 Exhibition St, Melbourne.
Telephone 9666 7259.

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 20 min

1.1 Remind participants of the key point of the last session:

- many skills are developed in unpaid work

1.2 Check on student progress with the Profile of Skills task:

- all students should be ready to show the group their progress
- if required, collect assessment tasks and evaluate.

See Appendix 2 for a checklist to assist you in evaluating the Profile of Skills.

2 Re-Naming your skills 40 min

Learning the different names of skills used in the work situation can be very useful. Often an employer gives greater value to skills if they are phrased in a way that relates to the work environment. Students need to be fluent in this jargon if they are to communicate their skills effectively to employers.

The publication, *A Window on Women's Work*, by Lazenby and Poynton is a very useful resource in naming the invisible skills and knowledge that build excellence in the workplace. It warns that the language traditionally used to describe women's skills 'incorporates the biases, misconceptions and inaccuracies which already exist in the workplace and society in general about both women's work and women's skills'.

Therefore it suggests that people should be specific when describing skills and job tasks and to avoid broad terms like 'communication skills' and 'being a good team member' as 'they are often used to cover the diverse and sophisticated range of skills women use when interacting with customers, clients, colleagues, supervisors and managers'.

Though the focus is women's skills the principles of re-naming can be applied to men as well. For example:

Instead of 'I'm good with people',

identify the specific skills used such as:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| • advocacy | • mediating |
| • influencing | • negotiating |
| • lobbying | • questioning |
| • resolving anxiety | • interpreting body language |

then describe the skill: 'I use my ability to read body language and my negotiation skills in order to identify potential conflict and resolve it before it becomes disruptive.'

TUTOR NOTES



A Window on Women's Skills describes other effective ways of extending our language ability in skills identification. These include avoiding minimising, recognizing enterprise and industry knowledge, describing skills not personality traits, and valuing responsibility factors accurately.

Activity: Re-Naming your skills for the work environment
(see handout)

Distribute the handout and read it through with the group.

Ask students to work in trios to re-name at least two skills for each person.

Note

N.B. It is only necessary to work through Item 3 – *Career Planning*, and Item 4 – *Investigating a Specific Career* if participants have not already identified a specific career goal. Often this task has been completed as part of a unit on job-finding or career planning.

3 Career planning

Now that participants have completed a profile of their skills they are more confident of their self-worth, have a clearer understanding of who they are and therefore are more willing to set goals and investigate career options.

The next step is to focus on a career that interests them.

Several good career planning resources are available and have proven to be very successful with adults in the Adult and community education sector. See the end of the tutor notes for references.

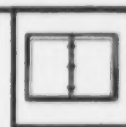
For the activities in this session students will need copies of *The Job Guide* and *Job Titles arranged in Interest Categories*.

Step one – raising awareness of interests 50 min

There are many ways of helping students to identify what would really interest them in a job rather than what they may have had to do in the past or what they only think they are entitled to do. Most are instruments where people answer questions about what they prefer to do and then are advised about the kind of jobs that suit them.

The resource list will help you find such instruments. I have found that students respond best to an interactive, verbal process rather than a pen and paper checklist.

TUTOR NOTES



So I recommend participants first play an experiential game such as *The Party*. This particular activity gets students in touch with what people and work they are most attracted to. You will find detailed instructions to the game in *What Color is your parachute?* by Richard Bolles.

BREAK 20 min

Step two – choosing career categories 20 min

When students have identified their own career interests it is easier for students to narrow their career search to one or two of the general categories.

Student resources for this activity are:

- *Job Titles arranged in Interest Categories*
- *The Job Guide*

Activity: Career Categories (see handout)

Distribute the handout and have students read the categories out loud and discuss what each might mean and the kinds of jobs that might be part of each category.

Ask students to mark with a + or – whether they are interested in a category or not and then choose the most interesting of the + categories to investigate further.

Prior to Question 4 on the handout, distribute *Job Titles Arranged in Interest Categories*.

Ask students to examine page one and two. Note that following the interest categories over 1000 job titles are listed. They are organised in sub-categories according to the amount of education generally required for each job. Have students look at the detailed lists of jobs and deduce the meaning of the sub-categories.

Instruct students to then scan a category that interests them and choose 3 jobs that they would like to read about in *The Job Guide*.

Step three – using *The Job Guide* 30 min

For students to feel confident in exploring their own career choice it is useful to spend 30 minutes in understanding *The Job Guide*, what it says, how it's organised, and what information it provides.

TUTOR NOTES



Activity: Understanding The Job Guide (see handout)

Distribute copies of *The Job Guide* and the handout.

Ask students to find the job description for welfare worker. Where would they look? Read out the welfare worker job description to the group as a whole. Note how the information is organised in sections.

Then ask students to complete the questions on the handout.

When this is completed have pairs report their findings to a different pair.

4 Investigating a career – introduction 10 min

With one or two jobs in mind, students are now able to investigate a career more thoroughly. This activity requires students to research details of a particular career focussing on the duties of the job, the working conditions and salary, and what skills or qualities are required in the work.

You may set the work as an independent field task or the class as a whole may visit The Career Reference Centre, 131 Latrobe St, Melbourne or similar vocational planning facility where they can find videos and written material.

The activity will take two or three hours to complete. If students wish to interview a person currently employed in their area of interest, you will need to extend this time.

Activity: Investigating a career (see handout)

Distribute the handout and answer any questions that arise.

Set a date when it should be complete.

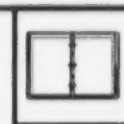
References for background reading

- *A Window on Women's Skills in Administrative and Clerical Work A Practical Guide* by Kim Lazenby and Cate Poynton
South Australian Department of Labour, 1992.

Career planning resources:

- *What Color is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles.
Ten Speed Press, California, 1994, published annually.
Uses a group game called 'The Party' to help people identify the kinds of interests they have and jobs that would correspond to those interests.
Also listed is a huge functional/transferable skills inventory.

TUTOR NOTES

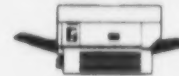


- *Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?* by J Crystal and R Bolles.
Ten Speed Press, California, 1974.
A detailed manual to use with *What Color Is Your Parachute?*
- *The Career Choice Guide*, by Bob Bisdee.
Penguin Books, Australia, 1987.
Uses ten occupational categories and lists a variety of jobs for each category.
- *Up the Ladder Without the Snakes*, by Don Clayton.
McGraw Hill, Sydney, 1991.
For those with more education. Good job aptitude and interests questionnaire – use instead of CES Job categories with more able group.
- *Making Vocational Choices: a theory of careers*, by J. Holland.
Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1985.
Contains a Self-Directed Search for determining the 'people environments' that you prefer.

Further recommended reading

- *How to Make a Habit of Success*, by B. Haldane.
Acropolis Books, Washington.
- *The Three Boxes of Life*, by R. Bolles.
Ten Speed Press, 1978.

Re-naming skills for the work environment



Learning the different names of skills used in the work situation can be very useful. Often an employer gives greater value to the skills if it is phrased in a way that relates to the work environment.

Be specific when describing skills and job tasks and to **avoid broad terms** like 'communication skills' and 'being a good team member' as 'they are often used to cover the diverse and sophisticated range of skills people use when interacting with customers, clients, colleagues, supervisors and managers'.

Example: Instead of 'I'm good with people'

Identify the specific skills used such as:

- advocacy
- influencing
- lobbying
- resolving
- interpreting body language
- mediating
- negotiating
- questioning
- anxiety

then describe the skill: 'I use my ability to read body language and my negotiation skills in order to identify potential conflict and resolve it before it becomes disruptive.'

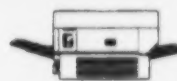
Example: Instead of 'I keep the supplies for the office'

Identify the specific skills by **unpacking the variety of tasks** under the one heading of keeping the supplies; such as:

- system design
- coordinate
- purchasing
- retrieval
- system maintenance
- management
- storage

then describe the skill as: 'I manage the purchasing, storage and retrieval of items of stationery with a total value of...'

Re-naming skills for the work environment



Instructions

Working in teams of three, rename some of your skills in specific words that identify more closely what you actually do.

Example:

Skill	Skill Re-named
<i>I do filing</i>	<i>I set up and maintain an office filing and records system</i>

[illegible]

Career interest areas



Instructions

- 1 Read the interest areas and discuss what each might mean and the kinds of jobs that might be part of each area.
- 2 Mark with a + or - whether YOU are interested in an area or not.

☐ **Artistic/Creative**

You appreciate concepts, beauty and good design, and would like a job which allows you to design and create functional and/or artistic objects. You could be involved in fields of performing and visual arts.

☐ **Clerical/Administrative**

You would like office work that involves writing letters, organising and recording information accurately and, at higher levels, planning and organising business activities. The operation of office machines might also be involved. Some clerical-administrative jobs include working with the public.

☐ **Community Service**

You are concerned about community welfare. You would enjoy working with people and helping with their personal problems. This could be in fields such as education, health or welfare.

☐ **Computational**

You might like to work with numbers, statistics and formulae to make calculations, estimations and costings. You may use computers and calculators in your work. You should like mathematics.

☐ **Engineering/Technical**

You would like to design and construct things and/or work with machines, tools and technical equipment. You should have a mechanical aptitude and like reading and working with technical manuals and plans.

☐ **Literary**

You like books, writing and dealing with and appreciating words and ideas. This will embrace all forms of printed and spoken materials.

☐ **Manual/Practical**

You might like to work with your hands, using the tools of your trade, making and repairing things. You appreciate precision and like working directly with a practical task.

☐ **Medical**

You would like to work with people involved in preventing, relieving or curing physical and mental disabilities, injuries and other medical conditions, or assisting those who do so.

Career interest areas

☐ **Outdoor**

You like to work in the open and move about mainly outdoors, often reporting back to a central location such as an office, depot, station. You enjoy the feeling of freedom that outdoor work may provide.

☐ **Personal contact**

You like meeting people – talking, discussing, perhaps arguing with and influencing others. You understand problems and points of view. A pleasant and outgoing personality is important for anyone interested in such work.

☐ **Scientific**

You would like to discover new facts and observe, investigate and experiment with scientific things, or assist those who do this work.

Instructions

- 3 Choose the most interesting of the areas to investigate further.

Most interesting category: _____

Your tutor will distribute the *Job Titles arranged in Interest Categories* now.

- 4 Scan a category that interests you and choose 3 jobs that you would like to read about in *The Job Guide*.

Jobs that appear interesting: _____

Understanding *The Job Guide*



Instructions

To identify what information is contained in the job descriptions within *The Job Guide*, answer the following questions. Find a partner to work with and choose a job title that sounds interesting.

Name of the job: _____

What duties would someone in this job be expected to do?

Are there any special working conditions? What is your opinion of these working conditions?

What personal skills or qualities are needed for this job?

What qualifications and education are needed for this job?

What are the job prospects in this industry?

Where would you go for more information about this job?

When you have completed the questions, find another pair and report your findings to each other.

Investigating a career



Instructions

Using the resources of *The Job Guide* and the books, videos and JAC computer available at the Careers Reference Center, find out all you can about a career you are interested in.

You may also find it useful to talk to someone working in a job similar to the one that you are interested in. Workers often describe the 'real' duties and conditions and the advantages and disadvantages of the job. (How would you find such a person?) Talking to someone in such a job would be another source of information for this exercise.

The headings below will help you collect relevant information.

Name of the job to be investigated: _____

Duties of the job

List the duties involved in this job. Include:

- what you already know about the duties
- what you have found out by reading and viewing videos
- what you learned by talking with someone in this job.

Conditions of the job

What would your working conditions be?

- Your working hours?
- Your salary – at the beginning, and after five years?
- The location (urban, suburban, country, indoors, outdoors etc.)?
- Would you need your own transport?
- Is child care available?
- How safe is the environment? (consider stress, lighting, fumes, chemicals, hazardous equipment, repetitive work, etc.)
- Would you be working independently, or as part of a team?
- Would you be working for the public service, or private sector?

Skills and personal qualities for the job

- What skills/qualities would someone need to get into this job?
- What skills/qualities do you have that would be transferable to this occupation?

Qualifications for the job

- What are the standard qualifications needed to obtain this job?

SESSION PLAN

7

TOPIC: *Planning Training Needs*

SESSION AIM: To encourage reflection on the compatibility of career choice and life style.
To facilitate the identification of training needs.
To explain and set the assessment task for the Communicating Ideas competency.

COMPETENCIES: Assess the performance criteria for Element Two:
Communicating Ideas.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	30 min
2	Compatibility reflection	30 min
	BREAK 	15 min
3	Planning training needs – introduction	15 min
4	Reporting to the class on training needs	40 min
5	Individual work on training needs	50 min

Resources needed for this session

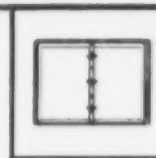
Multiple copies of:

- *The Job Guide*

Access to career videos, JAC computer, University and TAFE college handbooks.

These are available at the Careers Reference Centre, 131 LaTrobe St., Melbourne 3000.

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 30 min

1.1 Remind participants of the key points of last week:

- renaming our skills
- identifying career interests
- selecting career categories
- investigating specific jobs

1.2 Students form small groups of 2 or 3 and report on their career investigation progress.

2 Compatibility reflection 30 min

The aim of this activity is to help participants to reflect on the match between their skills, values and family interests, and the career direction they are developing. This activity acts as a form of 'reality checking' to test out the compatibility of their career plans with the rest of the lives.

Activity: Does this job fit? (see handout)

Distribute the handout and read it through with the class.

Invite students to complete the handout and then share their reflections with a partner. You may wish to brainstorm strategies for coping with mismatches.

BREAK 15 min

3 Training needs 15 min

When we set new career goals we often need to undertake further training.

This exercise helps to focus students on the details of the further education they will need to acquire and discover how long it will take. Students will need to use a JAC computer or the written directory of TAFE courses, University handbooks and have access to a telephone to enquire about specific costs and dates.

Activity: Training needs (see handout)

Distribute the handout and answer any questions.

Brainstorm where the information might be found. Students may wish to return to the Careers Reference Center to gather this information.

Before students begin working on the activity, make sure you have explained the oral report they will be giving on their training needs. (4.)

TUTOR NOTES



4 Reporting to the group on training needs 40 min

The task may be set in either of two forms:

- 1 As an assessment for Element Two: *Communicating ideas*
- 2 As a class activity with no assessment and fewer steps required.

There are different instructions and handouts for each format (see handouts).

Before the task

Before setting the task prepare students by focussing on the skills used in effective oral presentations.

Brainstorm what makes an oral report interesting. Board responses.

Look for points such as connection with the audience, eye contact, avoiding the reading of notes, clear voice, short concise information, well-organised information, use of visual material, e.g. chart, diagram, pamphlet.

Ask students how they would adapt the information to different audiences, such as employer, course coordinator, fellow students, tutor.

Activity: Oral report on training needs

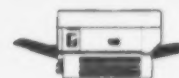
Distribute the appropriate handout, *Oral report on training needs*, and answer any questions about the task.

Then ask students to sign up in the order they wish to report to the class. This action often helps students realise that they will need to prepare in advance for the next session.

5 Individual work on training needs 50 min

The rest of this session can be spent helping individuals complete the training needs handout. Some students may wish to go to the Careers Reference Centre or other venues with reference material. Some will want to make telephone calls to confirm when courses begin and who the contact person is for applying for entry.

Does this job fit?



It is important that the career goal you choose matches with your interests, skills, and values. Take a few minutes now to pull together the ideas and reflections of the past weeks to see if this job fits with the rest of your life.

My career goal is: _____

The skills I have that relate to this job are: (copy these from your *Profile of Skills*)

My five most important values are: (copy these from your 'Values' exercise)

Are these values compatible with the job, do they seem to fit, or is there some conflict? (e.g. valuing financial security and wanting a job which requires several years of study to become qualified.)

If there is a conflict, briefly explain what the conflict is.

If your values and career goal are in some conflict, what are you prepared to do about it? (e.g. delaying the need for financial security till I finish training and establish myself in the job.)

What strategies might you use?

Training needs



What job/career are you interested in? _____

What qualification(s) do you need to work in this area?

Where can you obtain the qualifications if you don't have them? List three courses that are offered at universities or TAFE colleges or other educational institutions, that prepare you for this kind of work.

How can you get into these courses? Do you need Year 11, or VCE, relevant experience/background, be working in the field already, pass an entrance test, or attend an interview?

What is the first course you would need to take?

What is the length of this course if you study full-time? When is the next starting date of this course?

What is the length of this course if you study part-time? When is the next starting date of this part-time course?

How much does this course cost? What kinds of assistance can you get with the training costs?

Which institution that offers this course would you like to attend?

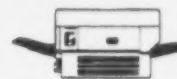
Their address is _____

The information or contact number is _____

The contact person's name is _____

Obtain a copy of the course outline describing the subjects.

Oral report on training needs



Instructions

The task is to communicate your training needs information to the class in an oral report. It should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

You will need to prepare your talk ahead. Consider your audience in choosing what information to include, what visual materials to use and how to organise your information.

Here is a suggestion for one way to organise your talk:

- Part 1** Explain your career choice, the qualifications you need, and how you could get into the required courses.
- Part 2** Discuss the first or preferred course you would need to take, including where, when, costs, length, etc
- Part 3** Discuss your feelings and thoughts about your training plan. Consider if you are ready to start, if there are obstacles in the way, how to deal with those obstacles, and what will be your first step in achieving your plan, etc.
- Part 4** Ask for questions from the class or comments about your training plans.

Oral report on training needs



Next session you will have the chance to communicate your training needs information to the class in an oral report. It should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

You will need to prepare your talk ahead. Consider your audience in choosing what information to include, what visual materials to use and how to organise your information.

Here is a suggestion for one way to organise your talk:

- Part 1** Explain your career choice, the qualifications you need, and how you could get into the required courses.
- Part 2** Discuss the first course you would need to take, including where, when, costs, length, etc.
- Part 3** Discuss your feelings and thoughts about your training plan. Consider if you are ready to start, if there are obstacles in the way, how to deal with those obstacles, and what will be your first step in achieving your plan, etc.

SESSION PLAN

8

TOPIC: *Matching Skills and Competencies*

SESSION AIM: To evaluate individual oral reports if set as an assessment task.
To explain the relationship between competency standards and recognition of prior learning policy.
To introduce the RPL application procedure.
To explain and set the next assessment task.

COMPETENCIES: Assess the performance criteria for Element Three: *Working with Others* or assess the performance criteria for Elements One, Two and Three.

OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	5 min
2	Oral reports on training plans	60 min
	BREAK 	10 min
3	What are competency standards and how do they relate to RPL?	45 min
	BREAK 	10 min
4	Preparing for RPL – Action plan	50 min

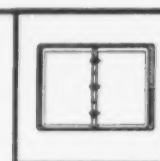
Resources needed for this session

Multiple copies of:

- *RPL, A Practical Guide for Women* or
- *New Place: Same Skills*

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TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 5 min

Remind participants of key points of last session:

- career choices need to be compatible with values and skills
- necessity of planning ahead for training.

2 Oral reports on individual training plans 60 min

This task fulfils the requirements of Element Two: *Communicating Ideas*. See Appendix 2 for a checklist to assist you in evaluating the oral reports.

Students communicate their findings to the class as a whole.

BREAK (optional depending on group energy) 10 min

3 What are competency standards and how do they relate to RPL? 45 min

Background information for teachers:

To be able to access the power of RPL, people need to understand that RPL is related to the concept of competency standards.

The purpose of RPL is to identify and assess learning experience in relation to clearly defined vocational outcomes or benchmarks.

These benchmarks are known as competency standards.

There are a number of endorsed industry competency standards accepted nationally at this time and more are being ratified every day. These are developed by industry training boards.

Competency standards

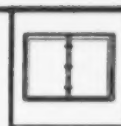
These are the things a person does on the job and their ability to perform. In the education setting, it's the ability to perform a skill and understand it.

In the case of education these competencies are called course or learning outcomes.

Most job descriptions are also being rewritten in competency terms.

For example, the Social and Community Services Industry Training Board of Victoria has recently released competency standards and elements for social welfare workers.

TUTOR NOTES



Among the many competencies listed, a few are:

'The worker will be able

- *to establish good working relationships with co-workers and consumers*
- *to support the consumer to access advocacy services*
- *to observe privacy and confidentiality of consumer information, according to privacy and disability legislation.'*

from A Training Strategy for the Physical, Sensory and Multiple Disability Sector, 1995.

When employment competencies are translated into the education setting they become Learning or Course Outcomes.

For example to become qualified as a welfare worker a person might choose to study the Associate Diploma of Welfare Studies. The competencies are written as learning outcomes that the student must satisfactorily achieve in order to pass the course. Two examples of learning outcomes for this course are:

'At the completion of this subject the student will:

- *demonstrate a working knowledge, understanding and skills of groupwork as an interventive mode for working with different clients and other groups'*
- *identify a range of methods, effective in dealing with conflict in group settings.'*

Curriculum document - Assoc Dip Welfare Studies, 1994.

The RPL process measures the individual's prior experience in life, work and other educational courses against these benchmarks. For our purposes we are limiting our focus to education benchmarks or learning outcomes.

Activity: Competencies and RPL (see handout)

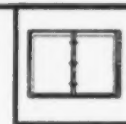
To explain the relationship between competencies and RPL to students:

- distribute and read through the information handout
- discuss the case studies in the RPL magazines.

The handout focuses on the job of community development officer as an alternative example to the welfare worker.

When the group has read through the handout, support the information with case studies from the RPL magazines.

TUTOR NOTES



The focus of these pages is to match skills and abilities with the competency standards of the job or the learning outcomes of the course.

RPL, A Practical Guide for Women, pages 14 to 17

New Place: Same Skills, pages 16, 17, 21, 22, 32, 33

BREAK 10 min

4 Preparing for RPL 40 min

Make sure students have their RPL magazine available.

They will want to use *New Place: Same Skills*, page 25 or *RPL, A Practical Guide for Women*, page 21

as a starting point for developing an action plan.

The task may be set in either of two forms:

- 1 as an assessment of Element Three: *Working with Others*
- 2 as the integrated task which assesses Elements One, Two and Three.

The latter meets the requirement for the general curriculum option of the Certificate of General Education for Adults.

There are different instructions and handouts for each format (see handouts).

Activity: Completing an RPL application form (see handouts)

Distribute the appropriate task to the class. Read through the handout and answer any questions.

Set a completion date for 2 or 3 weeks in the future, depending on the length of your particular program. Ask students to begin working on the assignment for the duration of the session.

Reminder

Remind students to collect RPL forms and course outlines or learning outcomes prior to the next class.

Competencies and RPL



Competency standards are about things a person does on the job and their ability to perform them.

In the education setting, a competency is the ability to perform a skill and understand it.

In education these competencies are called course or **learning outcomes**.

Example

Here is an example of a standard expected of someone on the job and the learning outcome of a student training for the same job.

The job is Community Development Officer. The course is the Associate Diploma of Social Science (Community Development), offered at several TAFE colleges.

There are eleven competency standards for this job.

One of these is:

The worker is able to apply a range of communication skills in a community development context.

These are explained in detail elsewhere.

In the course, the Associate Diploma of Social Science (Community Development), this communication skill standard is translated into a number of specific course outcomes such as:

- prepare a submission for funding
- deliver an oral presentation relevant to a specific task.

If a student already had experience in preparing submissions for funding or in giving oral presentations then they could apply for RPL and exemption from that part of the course.

When you apply for RPL you compare what you have learned from work experience, education and life experience with the the learning outcomes of the course.



Completing a mock or real RPL application form

Background for students

The task is to work together to successfully fill in a RPL application form. You will meet in small groups and plan the necessary steps to achieve this aim.

This task is the final goal of the course. It brings together the work you have been doing in identifying your skills, your prior work experience in the home, in the community, and in paid employment.

In completing the application form you will compare this experience against learning outcomes in a training course of your choice. By matching your prior experience against what the course teaches, you may shorten the time and cost of your training.

To complete the assignment you will need to refer to your Profile of Skills, and Training needs exercises. They will provide much of the information required.

You will also find information about completing the RPL form in your RPL magazine.

The assignment is divided into sections listed below. Follow each one through to the end.

Instructions

- 1 In a short statement, explain what your career goal is and the training needed to reach this goal.
- 2 Form a small team of 3 or 4 people. You will work with this team in completing this assignment.
With your team devise:
 - a list of steps you will each need to take to complete the RPL application form. Include all the information you will need to collect from further education colleges, and the evidence needed to prove your prior learning and skills
 - a timeline showing when the material needs to be ready
 - set a date for the next team meeting.

This is called an Action Plan.

- 3 Write out a personal action plan, detailing what information you need to collect and by what date, and include it in this assignment.

Completing a mock or real RPL application form



- 4 Occasionally, meet with your team to report on your progress. Help each other to gather evidence of skills.
- 5 Complete the RPL application form. Choose someone from your team to check your form for accuracy and completeness.
- 6 Submit the assignment.
It should include:
 - Statement of career goal and training plan
 - Personal action plan
 - RPL application form with attached evidence.



Completing a mock or real RPL application form

Background for students

The task is to work together to successfully fill in a RPL application form. You will meet in small groups and plan the necessary steps to achieve this aim.

This task is the final goal of the course. It brings together the work you have been doing in identifying your skills, your prior work experience in the home, in the community, and in paid employment.

In completing the application form you will compare these against learning outcomes in a training course of your choice. By matching your prior experience against what the course teaches, you may shorten the time and cost of your training.

To complete the assignment you will need to refer to your Profile of Skills, and Training needs exercises. They will provide much of the information required.

You will also find information about completing the RPL form in your RPL magazine.

The assignment is divided into sections listed below. Follow each one through to the end.

Instructions

Part 1: Intention

In a short statement of your intention, explain what your career goal is and the training needed to reach this goal. Include where and when you would study.

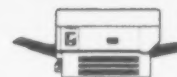
Part 2: Action Plan

- 1 Form a small team of 3 or 4 people. You will work with this team in completing this assignment. Each member of the team aims to complete their own application.
- 2 With your team:
 - devise a lists of steps you will all need to take to complete the RPL application form. This will include collecting the information you will need from further education colleges, and gathering evidence required to prove your prior learning and skills. What else needs to be done?
 - design a timeline for completion of each step
 - set a date for the next team meeting.

This is called an Action Plan.

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Completing a mock or real RPL application form



- 3 Write out a personal action plan specifying details of what information you need to collect and from where.
- 4 Keep a diary of your experiences in completing the action plan. The diary entries should include your feelings and thoughts about the events that occur while collecting materials, when choosing evidence, and about the value of team meetings.

Part 3: Completing the RPL application form

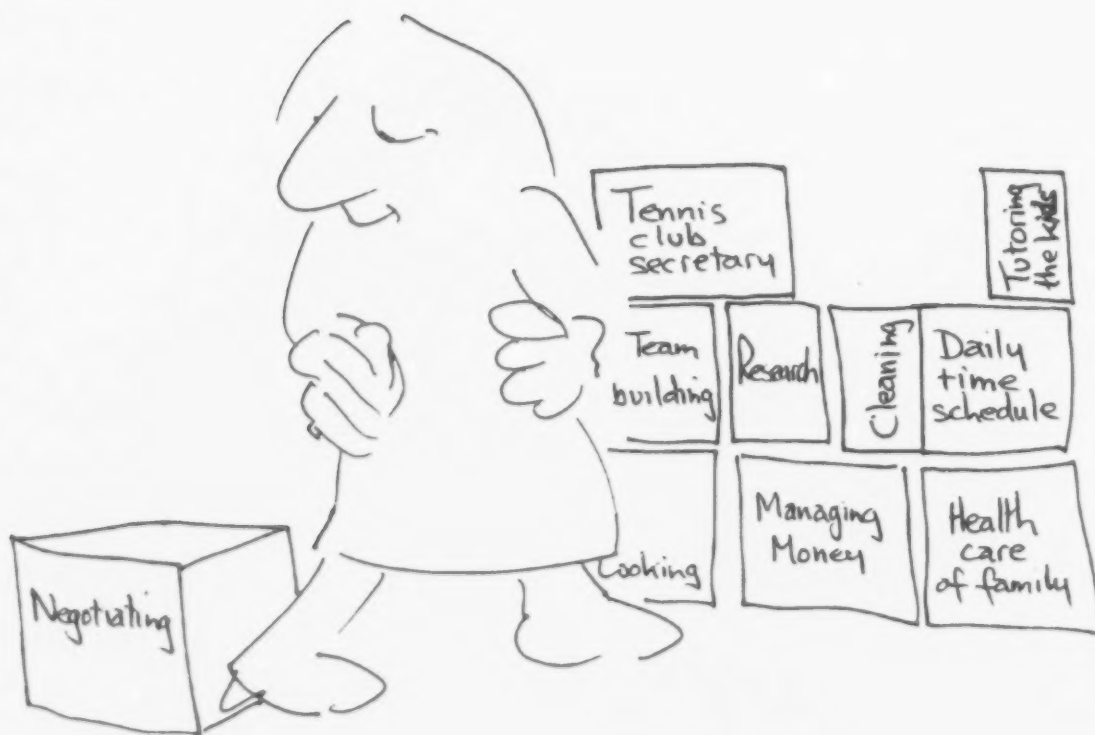
- Collect an RPL application form from the appropriate college or use the one in your RPL magazine.
- Draft answers to all the sections on the form. Ask a team member to check your responses for accuracy and completeness.
- Complete a final draft of the RPL application form.
- Attach photocopies of any evidence of prior learning such as letters from employers in unpaid and paid work, course certificates, photographs, work diary, etc.

Part 4: Submitting the assignment

The assignment may be hand-written or typed or word-processed.

It should include:

- Statement of intention
- Personal action plan
- Diary entries
- Completed RPL application form with attached evidence.



SESSION PLAN

9

- TOPIC:** *Applying for RPL*
- SESSION AIM:** To explore with students the range of evidence acceptable in RPL.
To act as a resource for individuals responding to the RPL application form.
- COMPETENCIES:** Continued assessment of Element Three: *Working with Others* or Elements One, Two, Three – if using an integrated assessment task.

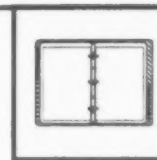
OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	15 min
2	Collecting evidence	40 min
3	Completing the application form	40 min
	BREAK 	20 min
4	Continued work on RPL application form	35 min
5	Action plan team meeting	30 min

Resources needed for this session

Multiple copies of:

- *RPL, A Practical Guide for Women*
- *New Place: Same Skills*

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 15 min

Quick oral report from each person on their progress in completing their action plan.

2 Collecting evidence 40 min

A key element in applying for RPL is establishing proof of prior learning or skill acquisition.

Students have been introduced to the idea of proving their skills since they prepared their Profile of Skills in Session 5. The handout in Session 5 entitled *Your Transferable Skills* directly asked them to cite evidence of each skill. So hopefully this will not be new information.

At this stage it's important to expand the definition of evidence to include less formal documentation than job references, course certificates or school reports.

Evidence for RPL can include photographs, diaries, pay slips, samples of work, newspaper articles, committee reports, audio or video tape of on-the-job skills, and much more.

Each RPL magazine explores many options.

Activity: Collecting Evidence

Part 1

Read through the relevant pages on evidence for RPL in the magazines.

RPL, A Practical guide for Women, pages 18, 19 and 20

New Place: Same Skills, pages 38-40

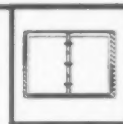
Part 2

Distribute the handout, *Collecting Evidence*, and ask students to answer the questions within their action plan teams.

The questions range from personal reactions to collecting evidence, to considering methods of citing evidence, and finally asking students to identify what each needs to collect at this point.

Remind students to bring their evidence with their assignments next week.

TUTOR NOTES



3 Completing the application form 40 min

The rest of this session is to be spent writing up responses to the application form. Blank copies are available in their RPL magazines but many students will have acquired a college-specific one.

Students may wish to use this time to work independently.

These forms must be complete for the next session.

BREAK 20 min

4 Action plan team meeting 30 min

Allow time after the break for action teams to meet.

The tasks are:

- to check on progress of individual action plans
- to support others to complete the plans
- to work in pairs to check the accuracy and thoroughness of RPL application forms.

5 Continued work on RPL application form 35 min

Some may need to visit colleges or the Careers Reference Centre to obtain course outlines, subjects outlines or learning outcomes.

Some may wish to make telephone calls to speak with RPL coordinators.

Collecting evidence



Instructions

- (a) Read through the relevant pages in your RPL magazine that discuss the issue of evidence.
- (b) Form into action plan teams and answer the following questions:
 - 1 What kind of evidence is easiest to collect? Why?
 - 2 What evidence would take the most time to organize? Why?
 - 3 What evidence would you attach to the application form that you mail in? Would you send original copies? Why?
 - 4 What evidence would you take with you to the RPL interview/discussion to show? Why?
 - 5 Within the team, how many different kinds of evidence can you collect?
 - 6 What evidence do you still need to organize? Complete the chart.

Name of team member	Evidence to collect

ALL of my learning is prior.!



SESSION PLAN

10

TOPIC: *RPL Interview*

SESSION AIM: To prepare students for the RPL interview.
To explore the function of a support person at the RPL interview.
To collect assessment tasks for evaluation.

COMPETENCIES: Continued assessment of Element Three: *Working with Others* or Elements One, Two, Three – if using an integrated task.

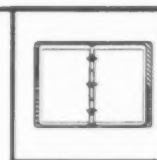
OUTLINE OF SESSION		TIME
1	Revision	5 min
2	RPL interview	30 min
3	Role-playing of RPL interviews	60 min
	BREAK 	20 min
4	Audio tape of RPL interview	40 min
5	Choosing a support person	20 min
6	Collecting assignments	5 min

Resources needed for this session

Multiple copies of:

- *RPL, A Practical Guide for Women*
- *New Place: Same Skills*

TUTOR NOTES



1 Revision 5 min

Remind students of the key point of the last session:

- evidence may be collected in a variety of forms.

Check on progress with RPL application forms and collecting of evidence.

2 RPL interview 30 min

It is important to explain to students that when the RPL application is submitted to an educational institution it is evaluated by a teacher of the course and that an interview may be arranged to help the teacher make a decision.

The RPL interview or discussion is an informal discussion or interview between the applicant and the teacher of the course and someone trained in RPL (this may be one and the same person). Applicants may bring a support person with them as well.

The aim of the interview is to discuss the applicant's skills and experience and compare them with the course outcomes.

The RPL magazines cover this issue well. You may wish to use them or merely remind students of this as a future resource.

RPL, A Practical Guide for Women page 30

New Place: Same Skills page 41.

The purpose of this session is to prepare students for the RPL interview, and to give them practice in speaking fluently about their prior experience.

Activity: Questions asked at an RPL interview

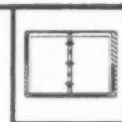
Brainstorm a list of questions that could be asked at the interview.

Board these and organize them under headings:

- Rapport setting
- General life experience
- General work experience
- Education
- Specifics related to learning outcomes
- Evidence examined.

Ask students to look again at their completed RPL application forms. Can they think of any other questions they would like to be asked that would help them talk about themselves. Add these questions to the list on the board.

TUTOR NOTES



3 Role-playing of RPL interviews 60 min

Using the questions generated, ask students to form groups of three to role play the RPL interview. The roles include two interviewers and one applicant. By rotating the roles, each member of the group is given the opportunity to play the applicant.

Step 1 Allow 10 min for the two interviewers to meet and to:

- quickly read over the applicant's RPL application form
- decide which questions they will ask and who will ask each

Step 2 Each group sets up a separate space with 3 chairs and conducts the interview. The tutor can move around listening and coaching if necessary.

Step 3 Debrief as a whole group after the first round of interviews to elicit any questions or problems. Debrief after the second and third rounds to focus on examples of successful answers to questions and on solutions to handling physical evidence.

Allow time for each new set of interviewers to read the applicant's application form and choose questions to ask.

Note that it isn't necessary to role play the results of the interview ie the granting or denying of RPL. The point is for students to practice talking about their own skills, life experiences and explaining how they match up to the course.

BREAK 20 min (between rounds of interviews when energy has dropped)

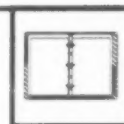
4 Audio tape of RPL interview 40 min

To give students an idea of what an interview might be like, you may wish to purchase one of the audio cassette tapes of an RPL interview from Broadmeadows Recognition and Assessment Centre. One specifically addresses Non-English speaking background students.

Alternatively, you may wish to invite in a guest speaker who has completed the process as an applicant and is happy to talk about their experience.

Remind students that very occasionally further assessment is required after the interview such as a demonstration of skills.

TUTOR NOTES



5 Choosing a support person 20 min

By now students will probably be more confident about speaking about themselves and may wish to attend the RPL alone. However, some may not, so it could be useful to explore the role of a support person. Sometimes this is a personal friend, sometimes it is an employer or work colleague.

Activity: Support at the interview

Ask students to work in small groups to answer the following questions:

- What kind of help might you need at the RPL interview?
- Who might be useful as a support person? Why?
- What kind of help would you be prepared to give someone else?

Finish the discussion by reading the short excerpts on this subject from the RPL magazines.

RPL, A Practical Guide for Women page 30

New Place: Same Skills page 4.

6 Collect assignments 5 min

If students have completed assignments, collect them.

Final session

A date is to be arranged depending on the length on the program.

In the final session you may wish to evaluate the program, present certificates, return assignments, facilitate the ending of the life of the group and generally celebrate their achievements.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 *Building on Experience* course competencies

Appendix 2 **Assessment tasks and tutor checklists**

This appendix includes the three individual assessment tasks and the accompanying tutor checklists. The checklists can be used to verify that student work reaches the required level of competency. The tasks and checklists are provided only as a model for other assessment tools which tutors may wish to develop. They are not prescribed.

Appendix 3 **Certificate of General Education for Adults, general curriculum option (GCO), assessment and moderation documentation**

This appendix provides a model of the necessary documentation to meet the requirements of moderation for the general curriculum option of the CGEA.

It follows the format prescribed by moderation panels for CGEA assessment of the GCO, including cover sheet, teacher's checklist and copy of the assessment task. A sample of a student's assignment would need to be included for verification.

Course Competencies

Nominal duration 30 hours

Element One: *Collecting Information*

On completion of this course the learner will be able to collect, analyse and organise information, relevant to skills acquired in the learner's past education, work and life experience.

Entry requirements

Foundation level (Level 2) of the Certificate of General Education or its equivalent. (See document: Certificates for General Education for Adults, State Training Board, 1993)

Performance criteria

- Establish the purposes for which the information is to be used and the specific requirements of the audience
- From a variety of sources identify, record and analyse own skills
- Select categories by which to organise this information.
- Check information for completeness and accuracy.

Range and conditions

- The content will be drawn from everyday life and will also include unfamiliar material.
- The student will need to interpret the guidelines for the completion of the task.
- The nature of tasks will be clear, with information required from a range of sources, or a complex task with information from a single source.
- Teacher will be available as a resource for consultations and feedback.
- The nature of tasks will provide for differing learning styles.

Examples of assessment tasks

- Plan and prepare a profile of skills. (See Session Plan 5)
- Using various sources identify jobs where specific personal skills would be useful
- Using the JAC computer, identify appropriate further study options linked to skills or interests
- Plan and prepare resume information.

Integrated task for 'General Curriculum Option' (See Session Plan 8)

- Complete an RPL application by planning and preparing relevant materials

Course Competencies

Element Two: *Communicating Ideas*

On completion of this course the learner will be able to communicate ideas and information relating to their life, work and education experiences

Entry requirements

Foundation level (Level 2) of the Certificate of General Education or its equivalent. (See document: Certificates for General Education for Adults, State Training Board, 1993)

Performance criteria

- Communicate ideas and information by adapting the content to the requirements of the audience.
- Select and use from alternatives the most appropriate mode and style of communication for a particular context and audience.
- Explain the relationship between different ideas and information.
- Modify communication in light of feedback.

Range and conditions

- The content will be drawn from everyday life and will also include unfamiliar material.
- The student will need to interpret the guidelines for the completion of the task.
- The nature of tasks will be clear, with information required from a range of sources, or a complex task with information from a single source.
- Teacher will be available as a resource for consultations and feedback.
- The nature of tasks will provide for differing learning styles.

Examples of assessment tasks

- Give an oral presentation describing study options. (See Session Plan 7)
- Give an oral presentation explaining work opportunities building on prior life and work experiences.
- In a mock job or RPL interview, communicate how prior experience in life is transferable to the present situation.

Integrated task for General Curriculum Option (See Session Plan 8)

- Complete an RPL application by communicating information in a written format.

Course Competencies

Element Three: *Working with Others*

On completion of this course the learner will be able to work with others to identify and document prior experience

Entry requirements

Foundation level (Level 2) of the Certificate of General Education or its equivalent. (See document: Certificates for General Education for Adults, State Training Board, 1993)

Performance criteria

- Explain the value of teamwork.
- Manage tasks and set goals to meet the needs of each team member.
- Cooperate with team members to reach agreed goals.

Range and conditions

- The content will be drawn from everyday life and will also include unfamiliar material.
- The student will need to interpret the instructions for the completion of the task.
- The nature of tasks will be clear, with information required from a range of sources, or a complex task with information from a single source.
- Teacher will be available as a resource for consultations and feedback.
- The nature of tasks will provide for differing learning styles.

Examples of assessment tasks

- As a group, devise an action plan to complete an RPL application. (See Session Plan 8)
- As a group, plan a field trip to a TAFE College to investigate further education opportunities.
- As a group, plan a visit to the Careers Reference Centre to investigate career or training options.
- As a group, identify transferable skills embedded in a story of a personal experience.

Integrated task for General Curriculum Option (See Session Plan 8)

- Complete an RPL application by working as a group on an action plan for the successful collection of relevant materials.

Student Handout Session 5

Assessment Task for Element One: *Collecting Information*

Profile of Skills

The aim of this task is to record your skills, not merely in a long list but gathered together in groups under headings. These headings or categories are to be chosen after considering various options, such as people skills, technical skills, creative skills, etc.

There are three steps in the task:

1 Collecting ideas

Make a comprehensive list of your skills.

Include those skills gained in paid work as well as those gained in unpaid/volunteer work and household work.

Use several checklists to identify your skills. Both the RPL magazine, and the *I Can Do That Too!* booklet have lists of skills and your tutor will provide you with others as well.

2 Choosing categories

Choose categories from a variety of sources that best reveal your strengths. You can use the same sources as listed above to find a good range to choose from. Arrange your skills according to the categories you choose.

3 Identifying the purpose

In a short statement, explain how you could use this profile of your skills; who might want to read it and why.

Submitting the final product

When you have completed all these steps write up your Profile of Skills and submit it to your tutor for feedback. Include:

- a statement of the purpose of the profile
- a list of skills organised in categories
- a record of the sources you used.

Student Handout Session 5

Tutor's Checklist

Element One: *Collecting Information*

On completion of this course the learner will be able to collect, analyse and organise information, relevant to skills acquired in the learner's past education, work and life experiences.

Assessment task

The student is to make a comprehensive list of personal skills and collate them into categories that best reveal the strengths of the individual.

Performance criteria check-list

The student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of this element when the following criteria have been met within the 'Profile of Skills' task.

The student has:

- 1 Stated how the profile could be used or who might read it and why.
- 2 Used and recorded a variety of sources to identify the personal skills including their own narratives of 'Good Experiences', lists from handouts provided by teacher and those found elsewhere.
- 3 Categorised skills with a view to revealing personal strengths.
- 4 Checked final draft for accuracy and thoroughness.

Student Handout Session 7

Assessment Task for Element Two: *Communicating Ideas*

Oral report on training needs

The task is to communicate your training needs information to the class in an oral report. It should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

You will need to prepare your talk ahead. Consider your audience in choosing what information to include, what visual materials to use and how to organise your information.

Here is a suggestion for one way to organise your talk:

- Part 1** Explain your career choice, the qualifications you need, and how you could get into the required courses.
- Part 2** Discuss the first or preferred course you would need to take, including where, when, costs, length, etc.
- Part 3** Discuss your feelings and thoughts about your training plan. Consider if you are ready to start, if there are obstacles in the way, how to deal with those obstacles, and what will be your first step in achieving your plan, etc.
- Part 4** Ask for questions from the class or comments about your training plans.

Student Handout Session 7

Tutor's Checklist

Element Two: *Communicating Ideas*

On completion of this course the learner will be able to communicate ideas and information relating to their life, work and education experiences.

Assessment task

The student is to give an oral report to the class on their training and further education plans.

Performance criteria checklist

The student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of this element when the following criteria have been met within the Oral Report task.

The student has:

- 1 Organized the information to communicate clearly to the audience of peers and tutor.
- 2 Used appropriate visual materials to maintain interest.
- 3 Explained how the training plan would meet their needs.
- 4 Elaborated on information in response to questions and comments.

Student Handout Session 8

Assessment Task for Element Three: *Working with Others*

Completing a mock or real RPL application form

Background for students

The task is to work together to successfully fill in a RPL application form. You will meet in small groups and plan the necessary steps to achieve this aim.

This task is the final goal of the course. It brings together the work you have been doing in identifying your skills, your prior work experience in the home, in the community, and in paid employment.

In completing the application form you will compare this experience against learning outcomes in a training course of your choice. By matching your prior experience against what the course teaches, you may shorten the time and cost of your training.

To complete the assignment you will need to refer to your Profile of Skills, and Training needs exercises. They will provide much of the information required.

You will also find information about completing the RPL form in your RPL magazine.

The assignment is divided into sections listed below. Follow each one through to the end.

Instructions

- 1 In a short statement, explain what your career goal is and the training needed to reach this goal.
- 2 Form a small team of 3 or 4 people. You will work with this team in completing this assignment.
With your team devise:
 - a lists of steps you will each need to take to complete the RPL application form. Include all the information you will need to collect from further education colleges, and the evidence needed to prove your prior learning and skills.
 - a timeline showing when material needs to be ready
 - set a date for the next team meeting

This is called an Action Plan.

Student Handout Session 8

- 3 Write out a personal action plan detailing what information you need to collect and by what date and include it in this assignment.
- 4 Occasionally, meet with your team to report on your progress. Help each other to gather evidence of skills.
- 5 Complete the RPL application form. Choose someone from your team to check your form for accuracy and completeness.
- 6 Submit the assignment.

It should include:

- Statement of career goal and training plan
- Personal action plan
- RPL application form with attached evidence

Student Handout Session 8

Tutor's Checklist

Element Three

On completion of this course the learner will be able to work with others to identify and document prior experience.

Assessment task

The student is to work with others to identify the tasks involved in preparing to apply for RPL and to complete those tasks.

Performance criteria check-list

The student has satisfactorily completed the requirements of this element when the following criteria have been met within the RPL application task.

The student has:

- 1 Showed an understanding of the value of teamwork through active participation with the action team.
- 2 Identified a personal action plan and helped others devise theirs.
- 3 Cooperated with team members in achieving a completed RPL form.
- 4 Worked with another team member to check accuracy and completeness of RPL form.

Cover Sheet

Task

To complete a 'Recognition of Prior Learning' application form.

Stream

General curriculum option.

Element

3.1, 3.3, 3.4

Curriculum context

This task is the culmination of various exercises in a 30 hour course designed to prepare adult students to successfully complete an application for recognition of prior learning.

Students will be at foundation level CGEA prior to entry. The focus of the course is to identify prior life, work and education learning and to value it in the context of RPL in employment and further education.

Extent and nature of assistance

Teacher was available for assistance in finding sources of lists of skills and in discussing alternative ways of organising the material

Comments

Tutor's Checklist

Task

To complete a 'Recognition of Prior Learning' application form.

Contextualised performance criteria check-list

Element 3.1 To collect, analyse and organise information relevant to skills acquired in the learner's past education, work and life experience.

Element 3.3 To communicate ideas and information relating to life, work and education experiences.

Element 3.4 To work with others and in teams to complete a task relevant to RPL.

Element 3.1

- 1 Stated how prior experience related to the course for which they were applying for RPL (Section Two of RPL application form: course information).
- 2 Used a variety of sources to identify their personal skills including their own narratives of 'Good Experiences', lists from handouts provided by teacher and those found elsewhere.
- 3 Used a variety of sources to collect evidence to prove the validity of the skills.
- 4 Categorised skills with a view to relating them to specific learning outcomes or work competency standards.
- 5 Checked final draft of RPL application form for accuracy and thoroughness.

Element 3.3

- 1 Communicated relevant past work experience and life skills in the form required by the RPL application.
- 2 Selected appropriate modes of presenting evidence to substantiate the prior learning and skills gained from life experience.
- 3 Explained the relationship between the course for which they were applying for RPL and with their prior learning, by completing the required section of the RPL application form.
- 4 Modified first draft in light of feedback from team members and teacher.

Tutor's Checklist

Element 3.4

- 1 Discussed the value of group process through diary entries.
- 2 Generated an action plan to collect the necessary materials for the completion of a RPL application form, including course learning outcomes, college application forms or copy of standard form, or work competency standards, and evidence to substantiate prior learning.
- 3 Met regularly with team members to monitor the progress of each member.

Student Handout Session 8

Integrated Assessment Task: Completing a RPL application form

Completing a mock or real RPL application form

Background for students

The task is to work together to successfully fill in a RPL application form. You will meet in small groups and plan the necessary steps to achieve this aim.

This task is the final goal of the course. It brings together the work you have been doing in identifying your skills, your prior work experience in the home, in the community, and in paid employment.

In completing the application form you will compare these against learning outcomes in a training course of your choice. By matching your prior experience against what the course teaches, you may shorten the time and cost of your training.

To complete the assignment you will need to refer to your Profile of Skills, and Training needs exercises. They will provide much of the information required.

You will also find information about completing the RPL form in your RPL magazine.

The assignment is divided into sections listed below. Follow each one through to the end.

Instructions

Part 1: Intention

In a short statement of your intention, explain what your career goal is and the training needed to reach this goal. Include where and when you would study.

Part 2: Action Plan

- 1 Form a small team of 3 or 4 people. You will work with this team in completing this assignment. Each member of the team aims to complete their own application.
- 2 With your team:
 - devise a lists of steps you will all need to take to complete the RPL application form. This will include collecting the information you will need from further education colleges, and gathering evidence required to prove your prior learning and skills. What else needs to be done?

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- design a timeline for completion of each step
- set a date for the next team meeting.

This is called an Action Plan.

- 3 Write out a personal action plan specifying details of what information you need to collect and from where.
- 4 Keep a diary of your experiences in completing the action plan. The diary entries should include your feelings and thoughts about the events that occur while collecting materials, when choosing evidence, and about the value of team meetings.

Part 3: Completing the RPL application form

- Collect an RPL application form from the appropriate college or use the one in your RPL magazine.
- Draft answers to all the sections on the form. Ask a team member to check your responses for accuracy and completeness.
- Complete a final draft of the RPL application form.
- Attach photocopies of any evidence of prior learning, such as, letters from employers in unpaid and paid work, course certificates, photographs, work diary, etc.

Part 4: Submitting the assignment

The assignment may be hand-written or typed or word-processed.

It should include:

- Statement of intention
- Personal action plan
- Diary entries
- Completed RPL application form with attached evidence.

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